



Henry Ford Community College

Adjunct Faculty Organization

Statement of Principles¹

Prologue

In 1988, the American Federation of Teachers called it the phenomenon of the “vanishing professor.” Tenure-track professors are becoming an endangered species as America’s colleges and universities increasingly turn to underpaid, undervalued part-time/adjunct instructors.

No one can seriously maintain that the dramatic surge in part-time/adjunct hiring that has taken place over the last 30+ years is based on educational need or desirability. What drives this unhealthy trend is not education but budget – the desire to cut costs and to swell enrollments by any means available. As a steady stream of qualified academics continues to enter the job market, as tenure-stream positions dry up, as administrators decide not to open new positions based primarily on cost and as more and more faculty are denied tenure, the number of part-time faculty continues to grow.

Clearly, this trend will not abate absent a concerted effort to bring about change by individuals and organizations in a position to do so. The Henry Ford Community College Adjunct Faculty Organization is dedicated to doing something about it. We believe that the long-term interests of the College, its students, and the community will best be served if the Board of Trustees and other decision-makers join us in pursuing the goals outlined in this Statement of Principles.

Standards of Compensation

1. Part-time/adjunct faculty should be paid a salary proportionate to that paid full-time tenured faculty of the same qualifications for doing the same work.

When HFCC has hired a person and put him or her in charge of a classroom and students, there is no excuse for denying that individual the same salary, pro rata, that a full-time faculty member is paid for his or her assignment. This principle extends to any other work done by part-time/adjunct faculty members and other part-time professionals that parallels the work of full-time faculty and professionals.

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2. Part-time/adjunct faculty and professionals should receive prorated sick leave and pay for holidays and breaks.

3. Part-time/adjunct faculty and professionals should receive proportionate health care, pension and other benefits.

4. Part-time/adjunct faculty should be paid for holding office hours for student conferences.

Students in any class need their professors to be available to answer questions and to offer academic advice – either in a conveniently located office or, in on-line courses, through an electronic medium. This work, like any other, should be compensated. The grim reality, at present at least, is that HFCC compensates part-time/adjunct faculty members only on the basis of their time in the classroom and in effect asks them to “donate” their time with students. In the absence of full pro rata pay, part-time/adjunct faculty should receive additional compensation to hold office hours.

5. In the absence of full pro rata pay, part-time/adjunct faculty and professionals who participate in institutional committee work should be compensated for doing so.

Terms of Employment

1. Part-time/adjunct faculty members and professionals should be hired initially with the same care and subjected to the same interview process as any applicant for a full-time position to the department.

In terms of credentials, part-time/adjunct faculty should meet the same minimum educational and experiential qualifications as full-time faculty who would be teaching the same course. High recruitment standards also offer part-time/adjunct faculty members and other part-time professionals the opportunity to provide documentation of their teaching and scholarship and to enhance their academic standing within the institution.

In far too many instances, however, part-time/adjunct hiring is done at the last minute, without casting a wide net and without requiring the same qualifications or going through the same interview process as full-time faculty. While most adjuncts manage to do a fine job under very adverse circumstances, the quality in the classroom should not be left to luck.

2. A probationary period of time should be set for the evaluation of part-time/adjunct faculty members and other professionals, after which they will achieve a form of job security.

Evaluation criteria, standards and procedures, commensurate with the professional obligations of the position, should be comparable to those of full-time faculty. Evaluation

should take place over several terms but, given the nature of part-time/adjunct employment, unbroken service should not be required.

3. Upon successfully completing a probationary period, part-time/adjunct faculty and professionals should achieve a form of job security.

Living in a perpetual, year-after-year state of anxiety about last-minute appointments makes it extremely difficult for part-time/adjunct faculty to plan courses, blend courses into the overall curriculum and integrate themselves into the professional life of the institution.

Following probation, part-time/adjunct faculty members and other professionals should be placed on an institutional or departmental part-time/adjunct seniority list for future appointments with full credit for previous service. This should include eligibility to be hired for multiyear contracts rather than waiting until the end of each year, or each term, to see if they will be rehired.

4. Once seniority is achieved, part-time/adjunct faculty members and professionals should be subject to non-reappointment in only two circumstances: if the courses taught are not being offered, or for cause, utilizing all due process protections.

Arbitrary non-reappointment of part-time/adjunct faculty and professionals is destructive to the institution's professionalism and to academic freedom in the classroom.

5. Part-time/adjunct faculty should be permitted to order their own texts and design their own courses unless these are departmental decisions, in which case part-time/adjunct faculty members should be invited to participate in the deliberations.

6. Qualified part-time/adjunct faculty members and professionals who have successfully completed a probationary period should be given preference in consideration for full-time positions in accordance with the requirements of the position, the needs of the department and the part-time/adjunct faculty member's seniority.

Too often, service – even distinguished, long-time service – as a part-time/adjunct faculty member is overlooked when new full-time tenure-track positions become available in the department. Qualified academics who take on part-time/adjunct positions because of the unavailability of full-time positions too often discover that administrators and even some of their full-time colleagues question their professionalism due to the very fact that they accepted non-prestigious part-time work. The issue of professional respect urgently needs to be addressed on campus by initiating regular dialogue among faculty of all ranks – informally, through academic committees, and under the auspices of the Adjunct Faculty Organization and the HFCC Federation of Teachers (AFT Local 1650). Part-time/adjunct faculty who have shown a record of achievement deserve preference in the appointment process.

Standards of Professional Responsibility and Support

- 1. Upon initial appointment, part-time/adjunct faculty members and professionals should be oriented to the institution and to the department, to the curriculum and support services, to the institution's governance and structure, and to the department's expectations regarding the successful performance of their duties.**
- 2. To ensure adequate preparation time, class assignments should be made, whenever possible, using the same calendar and time line accorded full-time faculty.**
- 3. Part-time/adjunct faculty should be provided suitable office space and should have paid office hours to meet with their students.**

Paid office hours are a matter of course for full-time faculty but not for part-time/adjunct faculty. Most part-time/adjunct faculty members make extraordinary efforts to see their students, even though they may not be required to hold office hours and are not paid for doing so. But this should not be left to chance or be allowed to perpetuate unfair treatment. Any reasonable standard of good practice not only should require office hours but also compensation for them.

- 4. Part-time/adjunct faculty and professionals should be invited to participate in departmental meetings and other committees with voting privileges and should be compensated for doing so.**

The surest way to address isolation among part-time/adjunct faculty is not by *excluding them* from faculty decision-making, but by *including them* in every way possible. Students can only benefit when their part-time/adjunct instructors are more intimately involved in curricular and institutional affairs. Academic policy making can only be strengthened by including the perspective of all the professionals teaching at the institution. Part-time/adjunct participation in governance also advances the goal of strengthening mutual professional respect among all faculty members.

- 5. Part-time/adjunct faculty and professionals should have access to secretarial and technological services necessary to the fulfillment of their responsibilities as well as to adequate supplies, to the library and to other campus privileges.**
- 6. Part-time/adjunct faculty and professionals should have opportunities and financial support to participate in conferences and workshops for their professional development, to apply for grants and to participate in the institution's tuition reimbursement program.**

Professional development is particularly important for today's faculty in light of continual advances in educational technology and new research into student learning styles.